

## COMMUNITY / YPSILANTI

*Ypsilanti*  
Who's who in City  
Hall — M35

M33



## JOHN PORTER

President rolls up sleeves  
to fight for EMU interests

By JOHN BECKETT  
NEWS YPSILANTI BUREAU

**F**or the past six years, John W. Porter, president of Eastern Michigan University, has had his sights set on one thing: growth.

Now that Porter has seen EMU move up the enrollment ladder to become the state's fourth-largest public university, he's selecting goals in a new area: service.

The likely result is that in the next few years, Eastern Michigan will play a far more vigorous and visible role in improving social and economic conditions in the Ypsilanti area.

That sort of outreach effort is a good bet to become reality for one major reason: John Porter usually gets what he wants.

A workaholic who started his career in education as a janitor, Porter has blazed a successful trail at whatever task he's chosen, from education researcher to state superintendent of public instruction to EMU president.

As the first black professional in the research department of the state Department of Public Instruction, Porter set up a state student loan program, only the third such program in the nation. A few years later, as the United States' first black state superintendent of schools, Porter established a controversial assessment testing system for Michigan's public schools and helped make the state a pioneer in special education.

After a decade as state superintendent (the second-longest term of anyone who ever held the post), Porter took over the reins of Eastern Michigan, a school beset by problems. In less than five years, the school's declining enrollment and state aid problems had been reversed, new programs had been initiated and EMU's public image had undergone a definite change for the better.

Those close to the Eastern scene give Porter the lion's share of credit for the university's turnaround.

"If you take an objective look at

where the university has gone under his tenure, the conclusion is inescapable," said John Fountain, former EMU vice president now on a leave of absence from the university. "He has set goals and most of them have not only been met, but exceeded."

"He's done an excellent job as president of the university," said William Simmons, chairman of the EMU Board of Regents. "The kind of goals he sets have been realistic, and he's a tireless worker."

Apparently, Porter always has been a tireless worker.

When he graduated from Albion College in 1953, Porter took a job as a custodian in the Lansing school system, which at that time had a policy of hiring only one black teacher per year. When Porter applied, that post already had been filled. He switched to teaching (and accepted a \$100 pay cut) at mid-year when the Lansing school board decided to change its quota system. But in addition to teaching, he continued to work as a custodian for state government for the next five years, while he studied for his master's and doctorate degrees at Michigan State University.

Barbara Roberts Mason, president of the state board of education during Porter's tenure, recalled the day a tornado drill emptied the state department's building. Porter left the building along with other workers, she said, but he got into his car so he could keep on working.

At EMU, Porter has continued to be "a damn workaholic," as EMU Vice President Robert Romkema describes him. Porter begins his day with a half-hour exercise period at 5:45 a.m. and then puts in an inordinate amount of time — usually until midnight — pursuing college business or traveling around the country to serve on various boards and commissions.

"He's always challenging, always investigating," Fountain

See PORTER ,M42

## Ypsilanti's Depot Town draws from afar

By JAN COOK WEBB  
YPSILANTI BUREAU CHIEF

**YPSILANTI** — Just across the Huron River from Eastern Michigan University is one of the Ypsilanti area's biggest success stories — Historic Depot Town.

It's 1860s-vintage restored brick buildings have become popular spots to dine, play pool, listen to jazz, buy a concert ticket, shop for antiques or line up for ice cream.

The 40 businesses now operating along or near East Cross Street between North Huron and East River streets draw out-of-town tour buses these days.

Ten years ago the area began it's emergence from a down-in-the-heels neighborhood by the railroad tracks to a genuine Historic District with plenty of attractions.

"We're really just a back street town," said Tom Dodd of the Depot Town Association. "Of course, recently we've been compared to Bourbon Street in New Orleans."

"Depot Town's big three are food service, antiques and jazz," says Dodd, who is a teacher at Ann Arbor's Community High School. "Personally, I think it's great just to sit around at the sidewalk cafes and wait for the trains to go by."

Jazz has become "an instant tradition" in the past six years since a group of Depot Towners tossed around ideas at a backyard party, Dodd said.



Fresh produce is available on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Farmer's Market.

Now there's the Winter Jazz series, a June jazz extravaganza on Frog Island and the annual Heritage Festival jazz competition.

"It's caught on in the businesses too, like with Aubree's Second Floor," Dodd said. Among the headliners there this fall will be Lyman Woodard.

The Old Town Restaurant's moderately priced home-cooking is still a favorite of locals, students and visitors. Dodd knew of two student teachers last year who joined the old timers at the restaurant's Tuesday night chess club — "old plaid shirts and all."

Students who drive vans and trucks like to park right on Cross Street and play pool at Aubree's, Dodd said. Those who drive sports

cars, park around the corner and go into The Side Track.

Side Track fare varies from Middle Eastern humus and pita to some of the best hamburgers anywhere. It's as close to a Yuppie hangout as anything Depot Town can offer.

The neighborhood also offers fresh produce Wednesdays and Saturdays at The Farmer's Market. The market, which draws more regular consumers than any other feature of Depot Town, often provides cooking demonstrations and entertainment. The next big event will be a Fall Fair, Oct. 5.

The Ypsi Food Coop, at 312 N. River, around the corner from the main drag, sells "natural" groceries and Chef in the House provides

catering.

One of the newest "problems" in the area is plaguing the newest restaurant — Paponetti's Pasta. "They want it to be a take out place, where people have a cup of coffee and leave with the food," Dodd says. "But customers love hanging around and the tables are always full."

There are clothing boutiques and services including one the Depot Town's oldest businesses, Standard Printing.

Dodd takes responsibility for connecting Depot Town's history to its present by producing the monthly "Depot Town Rag."

The newsletter is "100 percent

See DEPOT, M40

## YPSILANTI

You can thank Greek general for town's unusual name

By CHONG W. PYEN  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

**YPSILANTI** — Why not Waterville or Palmyra or Springfield, instead of Ypsilanti?

An influential judge and student of ancient Greek, who was fascinated by the audacious tale of a Greek general fending off a Turkish invasion in a war to gain independence, decided that the new village on the banks of the Huron River should be named after the fallen warrior.

That was in 1825. So Gen. Demetrius Ypsilanti found his name on the American map.

Greece enjoyed the height of its cultural glory and power in the 5th century B.C.; its long legacy of humiliation and suppression began when it fell under Roman rule in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.

In the 4th century A.D. it became part of the Byzantine Empire, and with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, part of the Ottoman Empire.

Demetrius Ypsilanti was born on Christmas Day in 1793 in Constantinople to a Greek Phanariot family. He was the second son of Konstantinos, a liberation movement leader. Both Demetrius and his older brother, Alexander, served in the Russian army as officers and headed a Greek revolutionary organization called the Etaireia.

Both fought in the Moldavian uprising in 1821, and Demetrius went on to play a key role in a series of military successes, including the battle of Tripolitza (Tripolis) in 1821 and the Citadel of Argos cam-



**DEMETRIUS YPSILANTI**  
. . . a name of distinction'

paign in 1823.

Of all the episodes of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1833), it was the Argos battle in particular that captured the imagination and admiration of 19th century America.

On New Year's Day in 1822, Greek revolutionaries declared independence at Argos and vowed to end the Turkish rule. At that time, Demetrius Ypsilanti, 28, had been made commander-in-chief of the liberation army in eastern Greece.

The Turkish sultan, Mahmud, nicknamed "The Butcher," immediately dispatched two armies and a fleet to quell the rebellion. A strategic position for the Greeks was a

See YPSILANTI, M37

# EMU students often play important role in city politics

By BONNIE DeSIMONE  
NEWS YPSILANTI BUREAU

**YPSILANTI** With a lopsided 10-1 Democratic majority, Ypsilanti's city council is dominated by personalities rather than partisan politics.

It's also a city government where students have a unique chance to wield a significant amount of clout — although most don't seem to know it.

Three current city councilmen

Kevin McCormick, 25, of Dearborn Heights, Eric Smith, 25, from Saginaw, and Greg Dodd, 23, a native Ypsilanti — are recent or soon-to-be Eastern Michigan University students. One of Ypsilanti's five wards, the Third Ward, represented by McCormick

and Smith, is almost totally populated by EMU students.

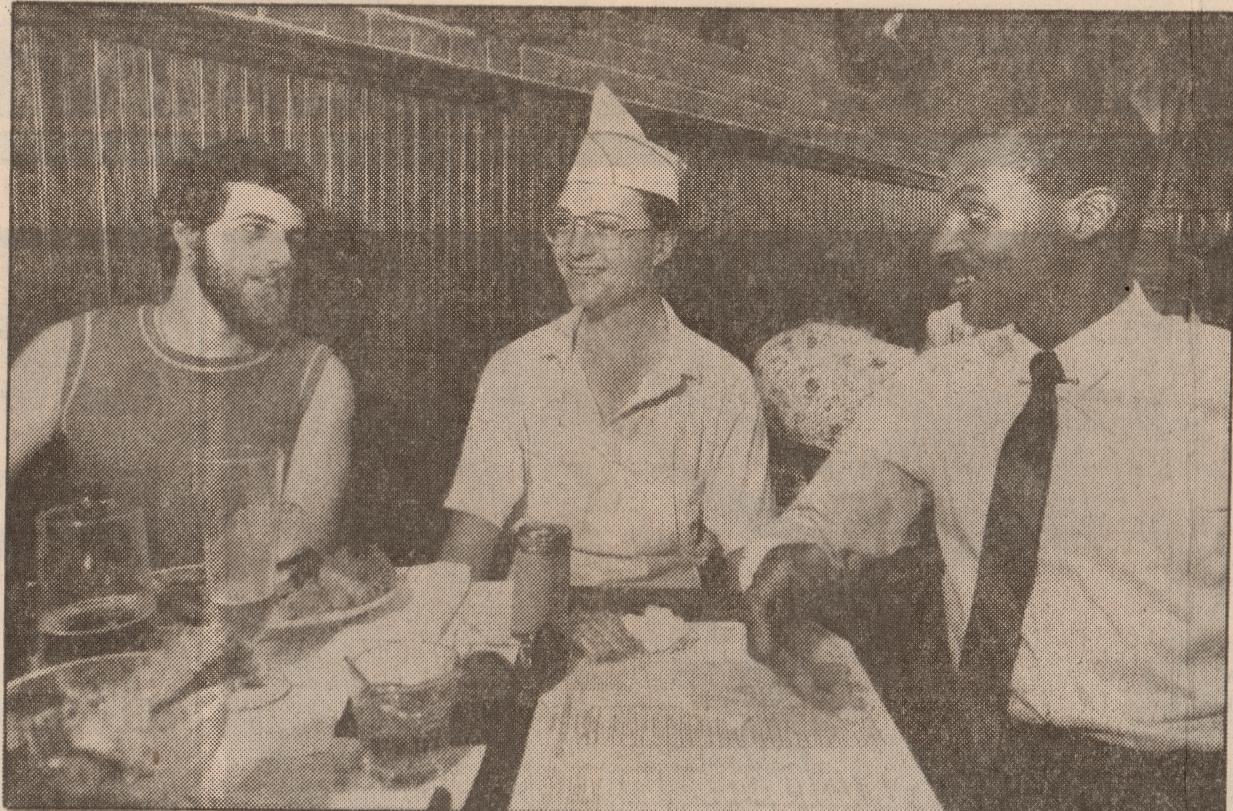
Dodd, from the Fifth Ward, got involved in city politics through his father, former councilman Tom Dodd. He and McCormick were officers in student government before their city council stints.

Ironically, the ward boundaries were drawn to isolate students in the early '70s because their sheer numbers were feared by the city's established politicos. (All but two of EMU's dormitories are included in the ward, as well as the cluster of apartment complexes in the area labelled "across the river" — north of the LeForge bridge.)

"They were afraid of the radical students, and now one of them is mayor," McCormick laughed, referring to Mayor Peter Murdock, who was active in various anti-war groups during his days at EMU in the late '60s and early '70s.

But instead of turning out in overwhelming numbers, students by and large have trickled to the polls in recent years, nearly always producing the lowest turnout in the city. However, in many of those elections, the Third Ward candidate has run without opposition.

"They come out when there's a contested elec-



NEWS PHOTO • ROBERT CHASE

Ypsilanti city councilmen (left to right) Kevin McCormick, Greg Dodd and Eric Smith talk politics at the Old Town restaurant.

tion," McCormick said. He should know. He attracted the Third Ward's highest turnout in recent years

271 votes cast — when he defeated Dwight Tennyson in 1984.

McCormick, who will graduate this fall, headed the university's tenants group for a year and says it is crucial for renters to have representation on council. He pushed hard for a mandatory inspection program for apartment buildings and a deadbolt ordinance, now both in place and working well, he says.

Dodd, McCormick and Smith believe it will be hard to arouse student interest in city elections because, as Dodd puts it, "They aren't aware of what the city can do for them." Most basic services, like policing and garbage collection, are performed by EMU in the Third Ward.

In addition, elections for dormitory councils and

campus-wide student government drain the student body of whatever energy it might have for city elections.

One recent exception to the town-gown separation

is the city's decision to convert seven acres of riverfront property donated by the owners of the Peninsular Paper plant into a park.

The project will develop the site, a favorite shortcut of class-bound students that is now overrun by weeds, in conjunction with a small hydropower operation at the Peninsular Paper dam.

The park will include paved bikepaths and lighting, particularly important because of the reputation the spot earned after the still-unsolved 1983 murder of an EMU woman there.

All three councilmen say they have always felt as if they were treated like equals by their colleagues. Smith, in particular, has taken on a great deal of responsibility by serving as president of the public housing commission. Having graduated in 1983, he also works a full-time job as accounts manager for Conway Central Express, a trucking firm in Ann Arbor.

Ypsilanti's public housing authority is trying to get back on its feet after years of neglect and horrendous debts. Smith says he took the job even though he knew he'd be "under fire," because of the group of Third Ward residents — practically the only non-students in the ward — in federally-subsidized housing in apartments "across the river."

Smith discusses details of renovation projects in the public housing complexes with alacrity and says he is determined to get police foot patrols back into the complexes, which have been plagued by crime.

Dodd, who works part-time at the Old Town restaurant and plans to enter law school in 1986, says he occasionally hears discussion of giving the Third Ward "observer status" on council during the summer months, when many of its residents are absent. But he doesn't think that will ever come to pass.

"Student representatives have brought a lot to council," he said.

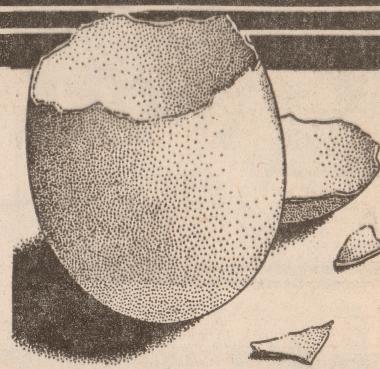
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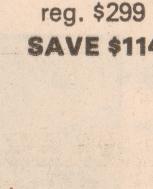
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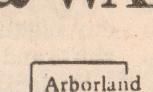


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# CITY HALL IS AT YOUR SERVICE

By BONNIE DeSIMONE  
NEWS YPSILANTI BUREAU

**YPSILANTI** — Taking on City Hall in Ypsilanti is a relatively simple task, even for newcomers. It's a small bureaucracy, with easy-to-find offices and accessible department heads. Here's a who's who consumer's guide of 1 S. Huron St.:

Ypsilanti operates under a "strong manager-weak mayor" charter, making City Manager **Matt Hennessee**, now in his second year on the job, the chief executive officer of the city. Hennessee, 27, a former assistant city manager in Saginaw, was the youngest and first black manager in the city's history.

Hennessee was appointed by city council and takes direction from those elected officials. However, he has ultimate responsibility for putting together the city budget, seeing to it that citizens' complaints are answered, and dealing with personnel matters. His office is located on the fourth floor of City Hall.

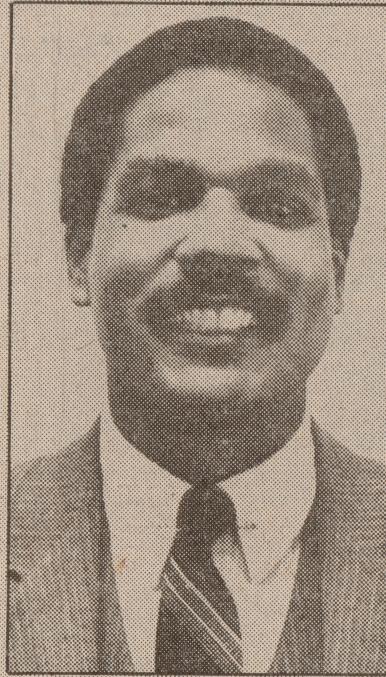
Hennessee's assistant, **Joan Helkaa**, is a 20-year veteran of city government who served as acting city manager for several months in 1984. Farmers' Market Manager **Gary Urick** also works out of Hennessee's office.

Working closely with Hennessee in formulating the budget is city controller **Linda Brooks**, who keeps track of the city's various accounts. City treasurer/assessor **Robert Lupi**'s office on the third floor is the place to go to pay parking tickets or any city fees; he is in charge of determining property values and sending out all tax bills.

Registering to vote is a short, easy process; just stop in at the city clerk's office on the ground floor, where **Robert Sloane**'s staff will assist you. Sloane has been a department head in Ypsilanti for eight years, previously serving as acting housing director and Personnel Director. Deputy City Clerk **Jane Tait** is a fount of information on city affairs, having worked in Ypsilanti for 20-plus years.

Much of the city's economic planning takes place on the fourth floor, where Economic Development Director **Suzanne Remien-Fejes**, City Planner **Mary Steffey**, and Senior Economic Planner **Susan Dickinson** have headquarters. Remien-Fejes writes grant applications to federal and state agencies. Once grant funding is obtained, she supervises bidding for construction projects and keeps council apprised of progress.

Steffey, hired this year, handles zoning matters — the "what goes where" planning of the city. She is the city's link to the "alphabet soup groups" like the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), where citizens are appointed to administer money collected



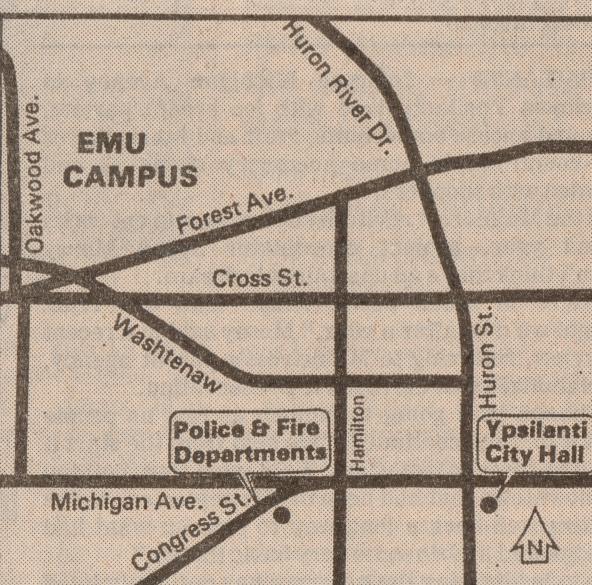
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through a special tax assessment to make improvements in Ypsilanti's business district.

Dickinson recently completed disbursement of two federal grant/loan programs which aided merchants and homeowners in renovating their properties. She is expected to move into more public relations work for the city and will serve as liaison to the West Cross Street project aimed at improving the neighborhood adjacent to EMU's campus.

Streets and parks maintenance are the bailiwick of Public Works Supervisor **Charles White** and his assistant, **Michael Ager**. The office, in the basement of City Hall, is also responsible for oversight of snow removal, leaf pick-up, tree trimming, garbage collection (a contract service) and sign and signal maintenance.

City Attorney **John Barr** and Assistant City Attorney **Monika Sacks** of the downtown law firm Barr, Anhut and Sacks work under contract for the city, representing Ypsilanti in lawsuits and rewriting ordinances. Personnel Director **Douglas Fouty** handles day-to-day involvement with contract negotiations and policies affecting city workers.



the city's firefighters, headed by Fire Chief **John Coleman**. The building inspection department, under the direction of Fire Marshal **James Roberts**, also has offices there.

Roberts and his staff, armed with new, stricter regulations, recently embarked on an ambitious two-year program to inspect all apartment houses in the city. The crackdown could have a significant effect on student renters, who have suffered from substandard housing in the past.

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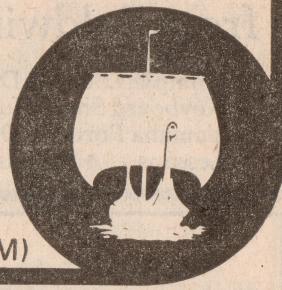
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## COMMUNITY

### YPSILANTI

CONTINUED FROM M33

small fortress in the center of the Argos plains, which Ypsilanti decided to defend with 300 men against the invading army of 30,000.

The Greek troops had only three days' provisions, but Ypsilanti tricked the enemy into overestimating their strength and supplies.

First, the Greek leader ordered empty baskets and barrels filled with dirt and had the tops covered with grain, which obviously led the opposing army to believe the fortress had enough food for a battle of endurance.

Ypsilanti also had his men hang up underwear in full view of the enemy, creating the false impression that there was a great defending army inside the fortress with the 300 men scurrying around as onlookers.

The Turk commander, Drami Pasha, sent an ultimatum to the Greek holdout demanding a surrender, but Ypsilanti's hearty, bluffing laughter at the suggestion was relayed to the Turks with the notation that the fortress was indeed impregnable.

Pasha nevertheless ordered his men to assault the fort for three days, and they were turned back on each occasion.

On the third night, with all the water and food exhausted, Ypsilanti stealthily led his men out of the fort at night and escaped through the vine-covered slopes through the enemy line to join the main revolutionary force nearby, without a single casualty. Meanwhile, the 30,000-men Turkish unit ran out of food and water for its men and horses and had to retreat.

Although Ypsilanti was widely recognized for his valor and military ingenuity and became president of the Legislative Assembly, he failed to muster enough political support to stay at the helm of the newly emerging nation.

His influence was constantly undermined by the anti-Phanariot party and the family of President Ioannes Kapodistrias.

Ypsilanti seems to have lacked the political savvy needed to make him a national leader.

One of his political rivals, Gen. Theodore Kolokotronis, wrote of Ypsilanti this way in his memoirs:

"Ypsilanti was a man of fixed opinions, honorable and brave, of small intellect and vain; also he was easily deceived. He was small in stature and size. His name was very useful to us in the beginning, but he had an idea that he should be made head of us all, and his brain did not furnish the necessary qualifications for the position in which he was placed. Had his brother Alexander come to us he would have been of real service, because he would have been able to strengthen us. For myself I did not bow down my shoulders to one of them. I was not going to make my-

According to the late historian Harvey Colburn, Demetrius Ypsilanti, as a very young man, had been thrilled by the American struggle for Independence and had actually journeyed to this country and participated in the Battle of Monmouth.

self a crupper for the leaders to ride upon."

In 1830, Ypsilanti was compelled to resign, and he withdrew from public affairs while unsuccessfully trying to restore unity among the rival parties after the assassination of the president in 1832. He died in the summer of 1832, at the age of 38 in Vienna, Austria.

But the legendary account of Gen. Ypsilanti had been widely circulated in the early 1820s in the U.S., catching the fancy of many Americans. One of them was Judge Augustus Woodward, who was appointed in 1805 by President Thomas Jefferson to be the first chief judge of the Territory of Michigan.

He is the one who wrote the original code of Michigan laws known as "Woodward's Code" and conceived the cobweb plan of radiating streets for Detroit which has a major artery bearing his name.

Judge Woodward never lived in Ypsilanti, but he owned large tracts of land here. When it was time to register the planned village, he was the person to decide its name. Among the entries submitted for his consideration were Waterville, Palmyra and Springfield, but he picked Ypsilanti.

But, as later accounts would prove, it was more than a one-way admiration spanning two continents.

According to the late historian Harvey Colburn, Demetrius Ypsilanti, as a very young man, had been thrilled by the American struggle for Independence and had actually journeyed to this country and participated in the Battle of Monmouth. "Woodward's enthusiasm would doubtless have been vastly increased had he been aware of the fact reported long after," Colburn wrote in his book, "The Story of Ypsilanti," first published in 1923.

Colburn wrote of the unusual city name:

"The name stands quite aloof from commonplace city cognomens. It is a name of personality, of distinction, a name in which one may take pride..." But there was a minor complication, he admitted. The local post office, in the first six months of the town's registration under the new name, reported 64 different ways of spelling it.



NEWS PHOTO • KEN STEVENS  
The bust of General Ypsilanti in front of the city's most notable landmark — the watertower.

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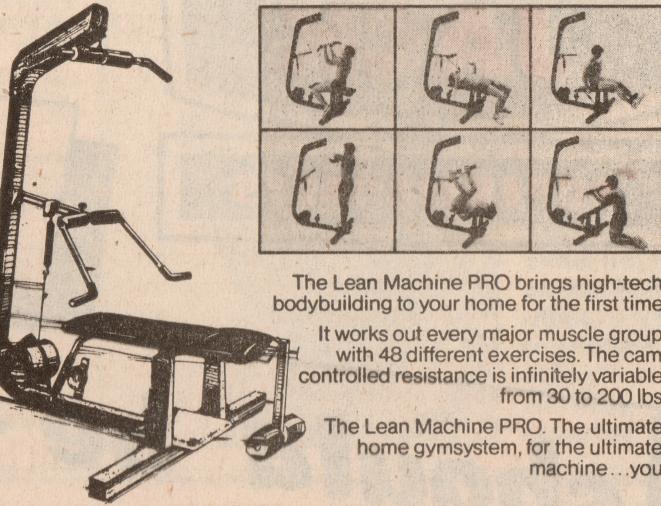
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## COMMUNITY

## REACT helps EMU students cope with school

By CHONG W. PYEN  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

**YPSILANTI** — For Eastern Michigan University students with problems ranging from a tenant-landlord dispute to classroom sexism to a grade grievance, REACT is like a one-stop supermarket.

During the last fall semester alone, REACT (Resources for Equity & Action for Consumers & Tenants) was visited by 634 students. The caseload re-

mained steady at about 500 during each of the past winter and spring-summer terms.

"The main philosophy of this office is we either help the person in this office or refer to another office," says Diane Bechel, REACT coordinator. "A lot of students are kind of battered around from office to office. When they come here, they want an answer, not another number." Funded by the Student Government, REACT was opened a year ago, consolidating scattered student services. Its office is at 235 Goodison Hall, across from the main library.

Primarily, REACT is an umbrella organization for six programs.

■ **Ypsilanti Tenants' Union.** Finding an apartment near the campus at reasonable cost is a prime concern for all new and returning students. The union keeps a list of available dwellings, their rents and conditions.

"We also educate people with tenant-landlord problems. Our emphasis is kind of preventative medicine for tenants... assertive communication with the landlord," says Bechel, 20, a senior in health administration. The tenants' union also helps students find roommates to share the cost.

From Aug. 19 to Sept. 20, REACT sponsors an apartment

fair at Downing Recreation Hall across from the Pray-Hall.

■ **Student Defenders Union.** SDU assists students having grievances against the university, most frequently in grade disputes. Under the school's grievance procedure, REACT represents the petitioner at hearings. "We try to resolve the grievance at the lowest level possible," says Bechel.

A student from a European country failed an elective class and started the grievance process after REACT intervened, her instructor discovered a computing error and corrected grades.

■ **Sexual Harassment Task Force.** The task force provides legal referrals for female students who feel their rights have been violated by male faculty through physical, verbal or implied abuses. REACT is trying to have the university-wide anti-sexism policy upgraded for stricter enforcement and clarification of certain clauses, Bechel says.

■ **Student Insurance Service.** REACT endorses Mutual of Omaha health insurance plan for students and theft and damage insurance for tenants. This year, life insurance is available for freshmen through the U.S. Student Association.

■ **Tax Clinic.** The clinic helps students filing federal and state income tax returns between February and April.

■ **Student Resource Center.** The center refers visitors to appropriate agencies for aid with legal, health, counseling or financial problems.



Diane Bechel,  
REACT  
coordinator:  
The main  
philosophy of  
this office is we  
either help the  
person in this  
office or refer  
to another  
office.'

NEWS PHOTO

• KEN STEVENS

## EMU student body president urges students to get involved

By JAN COOK WEBB  
YPSILANTI BUREAU CHIEF

'On this campus where only about 4,000 of the 20,000 students live here and the rest commute, we sometimes don't have much involvement. But you miss so much if you don't join a committee, a club, do anything outside the classroom.'

— Jamie Goldner

can't just sit back when these bureaucratic messes come up. If they talk to someone in the financial aids office, they'll make an honest effort to straighten out the problem."

Goldner, who is majoring in management and served as vice president of the student body last school year, said getting involved

in campus life is perhaps the most important step any student can take.

"My advice to any new student is 'join something,'" she said.

"On this campus where only about 4,000 of the 20,000 students live here and the rest commute, we sometimes don't have much involvement. But you miss so much if you don't join a committee, a club, do anything outside the classroom."

Goldner, a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma social sorority, said the best classroom experience she's had was in Gail Compton's interpersonal communications class.

The "class to not miss" at EMU, according to her many contacts with students, is William Fennell's beginning biology class. "I'm not into cutting up pigs, myself, but everyone I talk to had the greatest experience in Dr. Fennell's class," she said. "Even though it's a huge lecture section, he manages to make it interesting and fun."

Among the best Eastern's home city has to offer students is Depot Town's shops, restaurants and bars, according to Goldner.

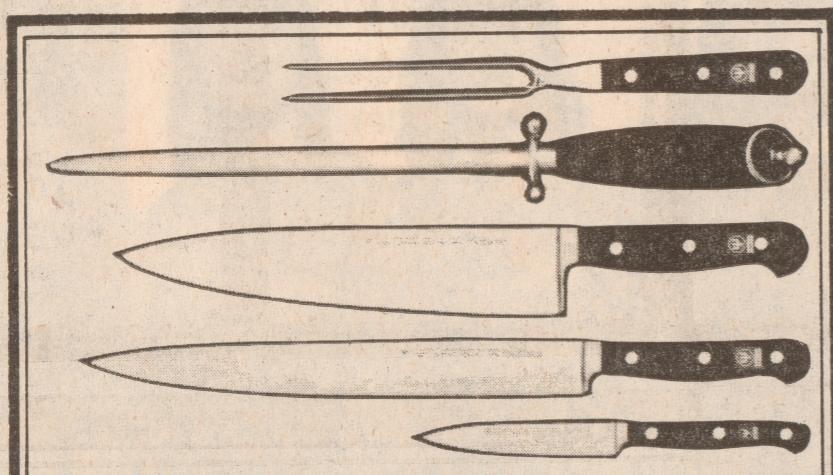
"Depot Town's great and students really enjoy downtown's restaurants and bars," she said. "What's here is used, but for serious shopping, most kids go out to the mall at Briarwood."

Among the projects Goldner has worked on as a student leader is aimed at improving the shopping district just off campus on Cross Street.

She's also pleased that the university has studied its never-ending parking problems and plans to eliminate coin operated gates that troubled students last year. "We will be moving to a permit system that should really help," she said.

Students interested in campus government are welcome at regular public meetings of the 30-member Student Senate at 6 p.m. Tuesday's in McKenna Union. The next meeting will be Sept. 10.

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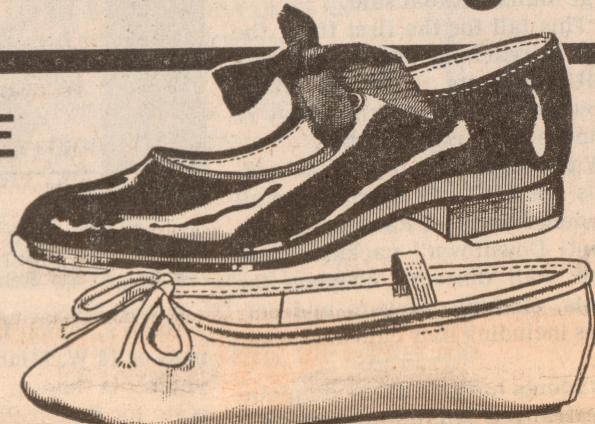
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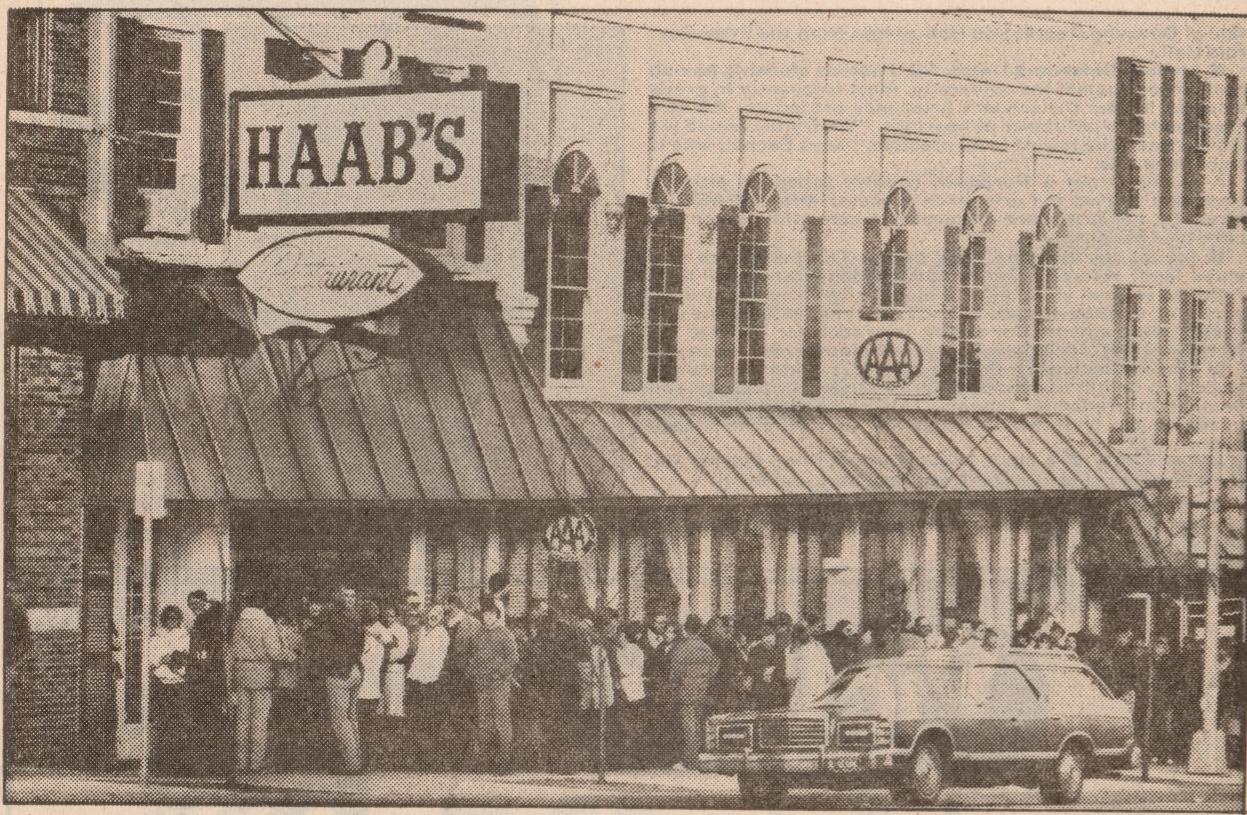
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Haab's, which has been in business at 18 W. Michigan Ave. for 51 years, is known throughout the state for its excellent beef entrees.

## Downtown Ypsi caters to EMU with attempts to lure students

By JAN COOK WEBB  
YPSILANTI BUREAU CHIEF

**YPSILANTI** — With a centralized campus like Eastern Michigan University's, students often have felt they lived on an island.

But more and more, downtown Ypsilanti and EMU are cooperating as a community, said Mike Kabat, a leader of the Central Business Community and owner of Haab's, one of downtown's most popular restaurants.

"Because EMU's campus often has been like an island, students have tended to shop when they went home or to seek out one of the large malls," Kabat said.

"This fall for the first time, the CBC is reaching out to welcome EMU students ... to let them know we're here, we know they're people and we're people too."

With cooperation from EMU officials, the CBC will distribute to all residence halls a "Passport to Ypsilanti Downtown" package complete with discount coupons for meals, clothing, flowers and services including hair cuts and printing.

Students haven't been completely estranged from the downtown business district which is centralized north of Michigan Avenue between North Huron on the east and Hamilton on the west.



MIKE KABAT  
...Central Business Community leader

Haab's, which has been in business at 18 W. Michigan Ave. for 51 years, is known throughout the state for its excellent beef entrees and to EMU students as a special place to have their parents take them out to dinner.

Mainstreet restaurant, across

Michigan from Haab's, is a favorite spot for students to "have a quiet drink and talk ... solve the world's problems," says Kabat.

"The place for students to be seen downtown, especially for the Greeks, has become The Spaghetti Bender," he says.

The Bender, at 27 N. Washington St., offers entertainment, dancing and Italian, Mexican and American specialties.

Woodruff's Grove at 124 Pearl Street in the Centennial Center office building is another special spot for students to be taken by Mom and Dad.

The idea for the "Passport" promotion originated from discussions about how to help students open new checking accounts, Kabat said.

"The more we talked, the more we wanted to do something to help students realize they are part of a larger community than the campus," he said. "We have tried to make it easier for them to discover that there are lots of services and specialty stores ... plenty of ways for them to meet their needs without getting in a car, but by walking downtown."

The new outreach to students is part of the community wide, ongoing effort to revitalize downtown Ypsilanti. (See Page M36 for details on redevelopment efforts.)

## DEPOT

CONTINUED FROM M33

free" and provides news of special events and features on such topics as the 1850s clashes between farmers and railroads.

The Old Town Restaurant's moderately priced home-cooking is still a favorite of locals, students and visitors. Dodd knew of two student teachers last year who joined the old timers at the restaurant's Tuesday night chess club — 'old plaid shirts and all.'



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## COMMUNITY

# Energy, educational experience offset seniority on EMU board

Procedures, attitudes change in Ypsilanti



The faces that rule Eastern

By JOHN BECKETT

NEWS YPSILANTI BUREAU

**YPSILANTI** — The Eastern Michigan University Board of Regents is heading into the 1985-86 academic year with some new faces, new procedures and new attitudes toward governance of the university.

With a majority of members who have served as regents for less than three years, including three regents who have served for less than two years, the eight-member EMU board is one that is, in some ways, still learning about the university.

It also is one which seems determined to take a more active role in the implementation of university policy.

Under the chairmanship of William Simmons, the board has revamped its committee structure. Instead of having only one regent expected to attend the meetings of each committee (finance, faculty

affairs, student affairs and educational policies), Simmons has encouraged all regents to attend committed meetings so the board can meet as a committee-of-the-whole.

That process is working well, said Simmons, despite the fact that it forces regents to spend portions of two days per month on campus, instead of the one day a month most regents put in before.

"We are committed to the concept of working as a committee-of-the-whole," said Simmons, adding that he has been pleased by the numbers of regents attending committee meetings. Having single regents act as liaisons to the various committees "and expecting the board to have a comprehensive understanding of what goes on in various areas is not a productive way to work," he said.

In addition, the board — due largely to the prodding of Regents Thomas Guastello and Anthony Derezinski — decided this year to play a more active role in labor re-

lations by hiring a consulting firm to help with contract negotiations. That departure from past practice was initially greeted with dismay by faculty but sources say negotiations have been progressing smoothly so far.

Last spring, the board took steps to make its meetings more accessible to the public, moving from the cramped quarters of the McKenny Union's Regents Room to the union's more spacious (and lavish) Guild Hall. The board also adopted procedures designed to make it easier for the general public to address the board during its monthly meetings, which usually are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Dr. Richard N. Robb, the most senior regent with 18 years as a member of the board, said he has been "very pleased and happy" with the way the new board is functioning.

"We have five people who have been on the board for three years

or less," said Robb, an Ypsilanti dentist and former board chairman, "and I think in some regards they're feeling their way around. But I don't mean that in a negative way. They're just getting used to the situation. And they're bringing new ideas and emphases. From my perspective, it's almost like I'm the new member of the board. But it's been a rejuvenating experience for me."

Robb and former teacher Beth W. Milford, appointed to the board in 1974, have the most experience as regents. Geraldine M. Ellington, another former teacher, was appointed in 1981. Simmons, superintendent of the Wayne Intermediate School District, and Geneva Titsworth, associate superintendent of the Taylor schools, were named to the board in 1983.

Anthony Derezinski, an attorney and former state senator, joined the board in 1984 when long-time Regent Timothy Dyer resigned.

Thomas Guastello, also an attorney and former state senator, was appointed by Gov. James Blanchard this January, as was John Burton, former labor activist and former mayor of Ypsilanti.

Some campus observers have described the new board as "activist" or "pro-active rather than reactive." EMU President John W. Porter believes that "only time will tell" whether such assessments are correct.

"It is a different board, there's no question about that," Porter said. "And the fact that it is a different board with new members means that the experience of previous members will have to be acquired. Therefore, these people will have to ask questions and involve themselves more to learn things that previous board-members knew from experience.

"But to say that this board has a different attitude now may be reaching an erroneous conclu-

tion," Porter said. "They may just not have enough information."

Activist or not, the new board does boast excellent credentials in terms of its familiarity with education.

"There are several members who are, or have been, directly involved in day-to-day education," Porter noted, "and the board is very interested in education."

In addition to its four members with experience as professional educators, Simmons said, the board also includes "two former state senators who, fortunately, had to go through the entire hearing process on higher education, so they have an understanding of what it's all about."

"Although the board has changed, we've been fortunate in the kinds of people who've been appointed to the board," Simmons said. "They bring with them a variety of experiences that would be hard to duplicate."

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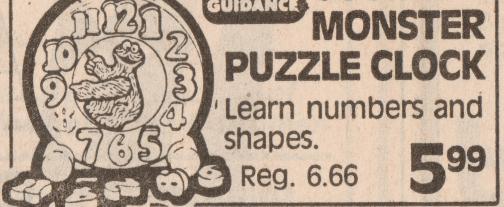


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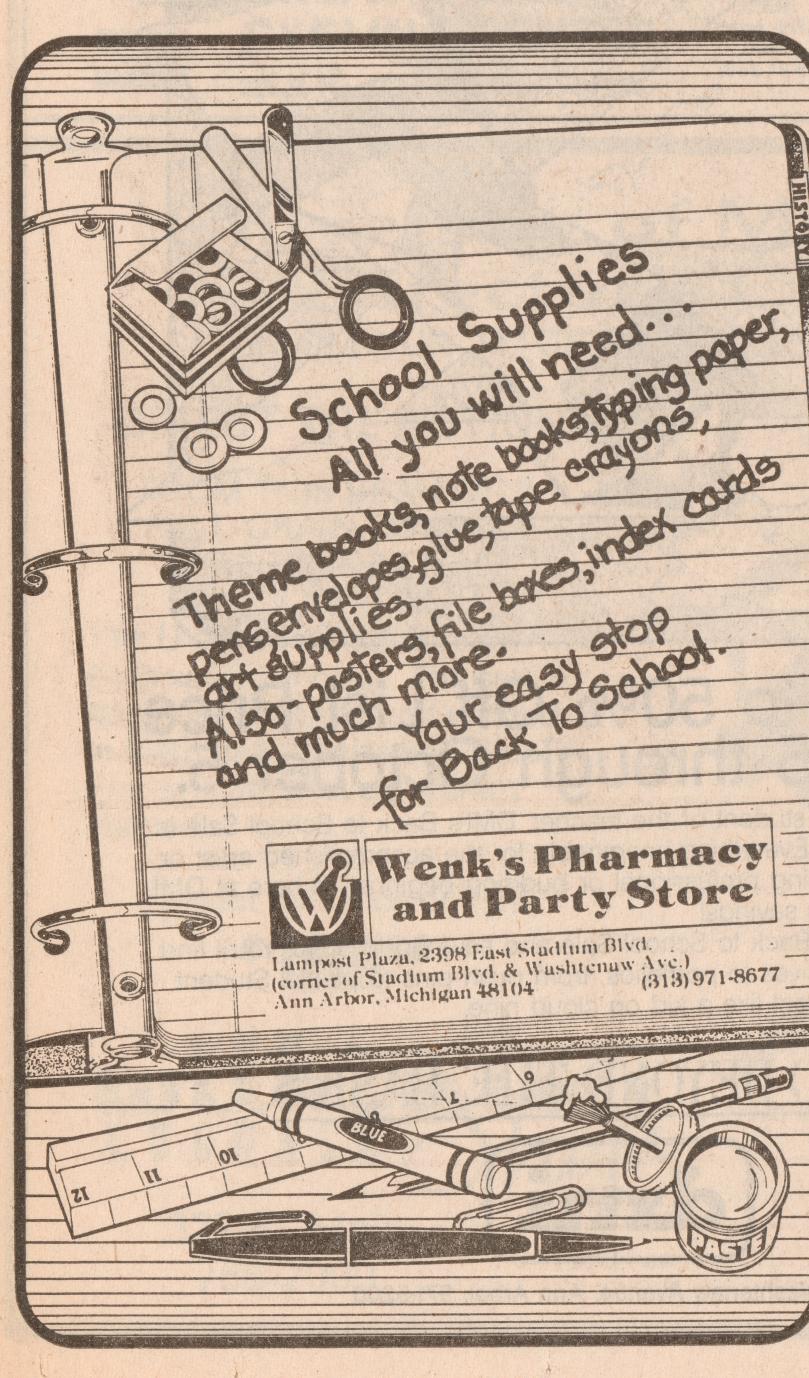
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**PORTER**

CONTINUED FROM M33

said. "You're not going to go to a meeting and snow him. If you're going to keep up with him, you're going to put in a lot of hours."

"He's an extremely disciplined manager," Fountain added. "He's totally in command of himself and his use of time. He doesn't allow any of his time to be wasted, nor does he allow any of the (university leadership's) time to be wasted."

"Disciplined" is a good word to apply to Porter. He devotes a great deal of time and energy to his \$87,000-per-year job and expects similar devotion from his subordinates. After setting a goal, EMU staff members say, Porter is relentless in his drive to achieve that goal.

Perhaps a little too relentless, too disciplined?

Porter has been accused of being autocratic and opportunistic. He prefers to see himself as a responsible, active leader with a visionary outlook.

"I say let's agree on the goal and then roll up our sleeves and accomplish it. Let's do whatever it takes to accomplish that goal. That's a different kind of style than some people are used to," Porter says, "and it bothers some because it's accountable."

"If we have a goal, then we can assess how that's being accomplished," Porter says. "And the more I have to get involved in accomplishing it, the more I'm going to question if we have the right people in place at that level. It is threatening at first. If something's working, I don't interfere. But if it's not, I do."

Porter believes in taking the lead — and the heat — himself.

"Only the president is held accountable for mistakes," he says. "If there's a mistake on tuition and the regents have to address it, I'm the one in the sweat box. Vice presidents and deans are advisers. They should advise. My job is to propose and the regents' job is to dispose. If they start disposing of an inordinate amount of my proposals, then something's wrong."

Several EMU administrators said they welcome Porter's strong leadership. "He solicits input but he makes the decisions. It's not majority rules," said one. "But he also takes the heat, and that's the way it should be."

Porter admits he could be seen as opportunistic. But he prefers to see himself as visionary, as a man who stays on "the cutting edge," as he's fond of saying, and grasps emerging trends early, giving EMU a chance to get a leg up on other universities.

Administrators and regents who have worked closely with Porter support that view. As evidence, they point to the runaway success of Eastern's College of Technology, an early Porter proposal, and to the tuition freeze at state universities.

Porter was the first to propose such a freeze nearly two years ago. When the idea subsequently was embraced by Gov. James Blanchard and the state Legislature, Porter and Eastern reaped the benefits of being early and strong boosters of the idea.

"He cemented himself well with the state leadership because he took the lead in what was to become an inevitable position," Fountain noted.

People who have had limited exposure to the 54-year-old Porter sometimes view him as aloof, indifferent or even cold. But those who have had the chance to be with him in less formal settings say that Porter can be a gracious, humorous companion.

"I think it's just that he controls his emotions more rigidly than the average person during the working day," said Vice President Romkema. When he accompanied Porter on a business trip to New York City, Romkema recalled, "During the working day, he was all business. But then we went back to the hotel, cleaned up, had a couple drinks, and went to a show and dinner, and it was like being with a totally different person. He had a great sense of humor. But he tends to not let down until the job is over."

He also tends to get by without much of what most people would consider relaxation. When asked to name his outside interests, Porter doesn't list woodworking or gardening. He spends time reading and walking the campus, he says, and he speaks glowingly of the various foundations and commissions he serves with — such as his chairmanship of the College Board, and his membership on the boards of the Mott Foundation and the Phi Kappa Phi fraternity — and talks about how taking part in those organizations helps him keep on top of developments that eventually help EMU.

Although he was a star athlete in high school and college (he set a basketball scoring record at Albion which stood until 1976), Porter doesn't often engage in sports. By early August, he says, he had played golf three times and had played one game of tennis in 1985 — even though, according to those who have played against him, he is accomplished at both sports.

Porter himself says that his limited time spent relaxing and socializing is his biggest weakness.

"It's tragic," he admits. But he hopes this is one area he can improve upon this year.

That may be possible, Porter says, because he no longer has to concentrate on building up the university. Gone are the days, such as in 1981, when Porter had to trek across the state hosting wine and cheese parties to boost EMU's image. The university is now viewed positively: "I even see Eastern bumper stickers and T-shirts in Ann Arbor now," Porter says. "We are not in the shadow of the University of Michigan."

When Porter took over as Eastern's 17th president, he immediately set out to make the university one of "quality, uniqueness and opportunity." He identified six areas in which to concentrate his attention and developed a "Decade of Advancement" game plan which broke the next 10 years into three phases complete with specific, measurable goals.

Such an intricate blueprint is typical of Porter, who often answers questions by listing the three, four or five reasons for an action, and then elaborating on the reasons — almost as if he's rehearsed them — one by one.

Almost all of the goals set for Eastern by Porter in 1979 have been met, with the university moving at a pace that puts it ahead of schedule in its "Decade of Advancement."

EMU's College of Technology has helped launch Eastern into a new area of teaching called "contract learning." Through this approach, EMU contracts with private companies to provide instruction — often specialized technical training — to employees of the firms. This approach, combined with traditional on-campus studies, has enabled EMU to garner additional money and attract new students for both credit and non-credit courses.

Eastern's facilities have been considerably upgraded during Porter's presidency. Renovations have been made to several campus buildings, including McKenny Union and Goodison Hall. A beautiful Recreation/Intramural Building has been constructed adjacent to Bowen Fieldhouse, creating a tremendous recruiting attraction which Porter is fond of calling "the largest university facility under one roof in the United States." Under construction is an addition to Quirk Theater, a \$1.1 million project that is the result of EMU's first public fundraising campaign.

Porter's golden touch also has been felt in the budget area, where EMU has prospered the last few years after some difficult times in the late '70s and early '80s. This year, Eastern was slated to receive

\$46.9 million in state aid. But, after Porter told a state Senate committee that EMU would need about \$2.5 million more to meet projected needs, the Legislature upped Eastern's share of the state pie to \$48.9 million. And it's not just in the general fund that EMU has had success; this year, Eastern also is receiving state aid for its new Corporate Training Center as well as planning grants for a new business building and renovation of Pierce Hall.

Last year, the university's enrollment topped Porter's goal of 20,000 (the largest in Eastern Michigan history), and this year it is expected to continue to increase.

And, as Porter likes to point out, this enrollment increase hasn't come through lowering any standards: Not only is EMU admitting more students but it is admitting better students and refusing more students than ever before.

Thus, Porter has led EMU through the advancement plan's first two phases: revitalization and stabilization. On the horizon is ex-

pansion.

Some of that expansion will take the form of an improved ability to solicit support, especially financial support, from alumni and private donors. "Cultivation," as university types like to call it, is highest on Porter's on-campus list of the few goals yet to be achieved.

Eastern's prime area of off-campus expansion during the next few years will come through reaching out to the Ypsilanti area and be-

See PORTER, M43

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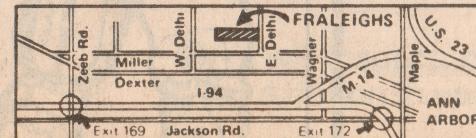
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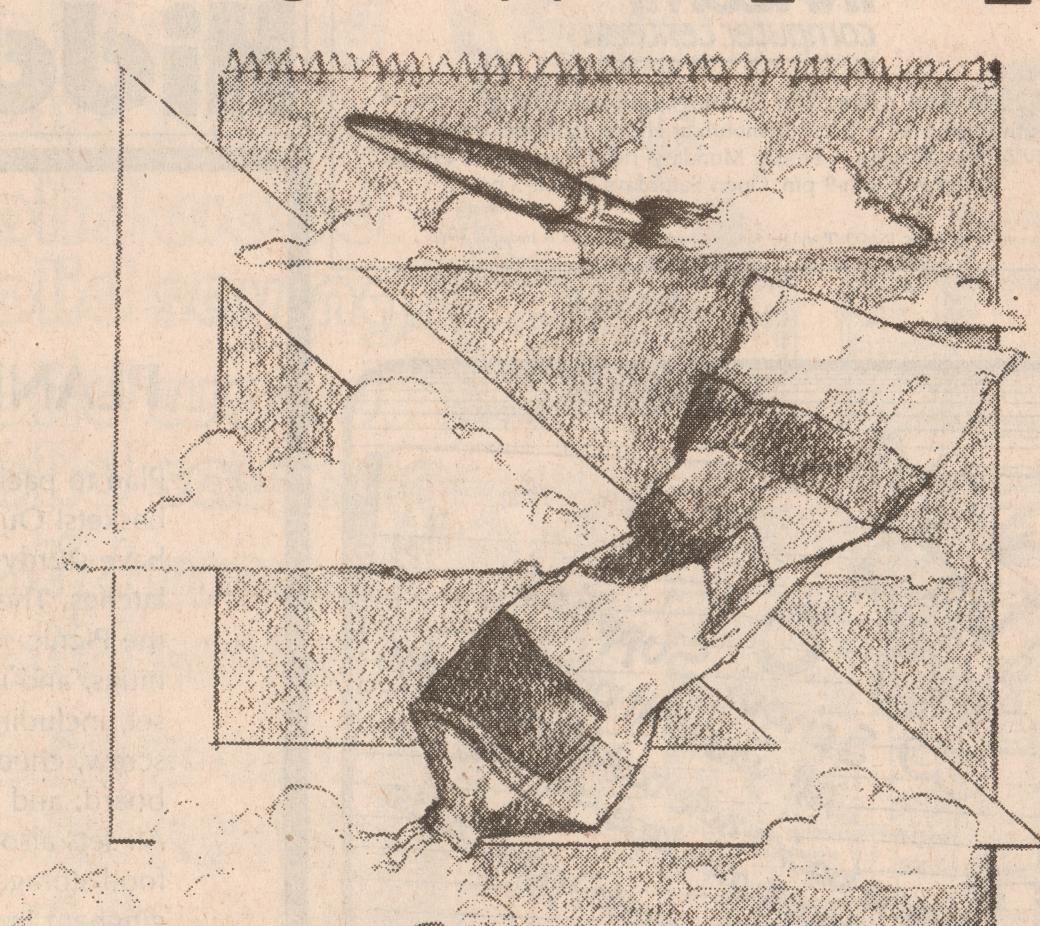
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## COMMUNITY

### PORTER

CONTINUED FROM M42

yond, say Porter, regents and top EMU administrators.

The Corporate Training Center is one example of EMU's expansion efforts. With Eastern playing the role of catalyst, that \$4.5 million project — which will be linked to a \$10-million hotel — has brought the university, Ypsilanti Township and the city of Ypsilanti together in a unique partnership which should provide a badly needed shot in the arm to the Ypsilanti area's economy.

EMU has cooperated with the city to revitalize the West Cross Street area, which borders the southeast corner of campus. Porter himself has taken the lead in forming a consortium of Washtenaw County colleges which has committed itself to improving the economy of eastern Washtenaw County in general and downtown Ypsilanti in particular. Also on the horizon is a greater involvement in working with youth from Ypsilanti's predominantly black south side to help them further their educations.

Such activity has not gone unnoticed by leaders of eastern Washtenaw County's black community, who praise Porter both for his leadership and for his value as a role model.

Matt Hennessee, Ypsilanti city manager, credits Porter with pushing EMU to be a catalyst for progress in the city.

"Dr. Porter ... is respected for his contributions not only to the black race but to the field of higher education in general," Hennessee said. "He's respected for the kind of sensitivity he's shown, not just to the black community but to the whole community. And there's no doubt in my mind that he has sensitivity and confidence in the black community, and wants to do everything he can to assist the south side area of Ypsilanti."

Such an assessment probably would please Porter, who admits to having a strong commitment to helping other blacks.

"I feel an obligation to perform in the position that I hold in such a way that I would be respected, regardless of race. I don't feel that obligation just because I'm black, I feel the obligation because of the position," Porter notes.

"But I do feel a strong responsi-

'I feel an obligation to perform in the position that I hold in such a way that I would be respected, regardless of race. I don't feel that obligation just because I'm black, I feel the obligation because of the position.'

— EMU President,  
John W. Porter

bility for doing whatever I can to further the quality of opportunity for education. And much of what I've debated and proposed over the last 20 years as state superintendent and president has been to do that."

Juanita Reid, president of the Willow Run Board of Education, said that blacks appreciate Porter both as an educator and as a role model.

"I think he's seen very positively by the black community," she said. "He certainly has been supportive of minority enrollment and he's been willing to take part in activities like participating at the public school level, where he's been willing to be a speaker and talk to students at commencement activities and awards ceremonies.

"And for many of the educators in this area, Dr. Porter certainly serves as a role model," Reid said. "He's been willing to share things, like the story of how he had to take a pay cut to move from janitor to teacher. He gives out a message that says when the door opens, you have to be ready. People can look at him, look at what he's done, and say if he can do that, if he can go from janitor to state superintendent to university president, then maybe I can do something, too."



Porter admits to having a strong commitment to helping other blacks. Above, he chats with attorney Fulton Eaglin before a meeting. At left, he enjoys a moment with EMU graduate and respected Ypsilanti educator Charles Eugene Beatty.  
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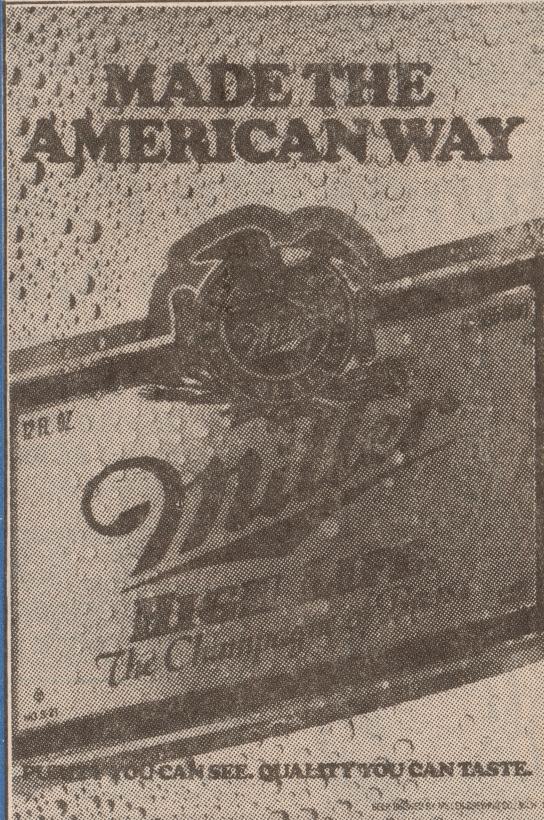
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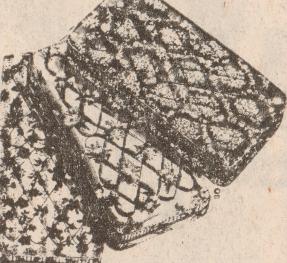
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